

Wright State University

CORE Scholar

---

Wine Journey: Tasting Dwelling Learning

Religion, Philosophy, and Classics

---

2020

## Introduction

Charles S. Taylor

Wright State University - Main Campus, [charles.taylor@wright.edu](mailto:charles.taylor@wright.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/wine\\_journey](https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/wine_journey)



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [Philosophy Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Taylor , C. S. (2020). *Introduction*. Dayton, OH: Charles Taylor.

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion, Philosophy, and Classics at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wine Journey: Tasting Dwelling Learning by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact [library-corescholar@wright.edu](mailto:library-corescholar@wright.edu).



# **WINE JOURNEY**

**Tasting**

**Dwelling**

**Learning**

---

Charles S. Taylor

© 2020

## Contents

### 1. Introduction

#### Contemplation and Fine Wine

- 2. Chapter 1 Expect the Unexpected: Heraclitus, Kant and the Aesthetics of Fine Wine
- 3. Chapter 2 Contemplation and Fine Wine: Tasting with Saintsbury, Schopenhauer and Pater

#### Poetic Dwelling

- 4. Chapter 3 Tasting Dwelling Thinking
- 5. Chapter 4 Gifts of Taste: Discussing Wine and Heraclitus with Friedrich Hölderlin
- 6. Chapter 5 Describing the Indescribable: Learning from Rilke (forthcoming)

# Introduction

These essays tell stories from a journey that began over 50 years ago. Beginning my final year of college I planned to attend law school and then contribute as I could to the search for solutions to the societal problems so dominating those times. A passage in Plato (*Republic III* 405a) was the catalyst to an unanticipated realization that I would pursue my goals more authentically teaching philosophy at the college level. In Spring two years earlier (1968) I had already made an abrupt change abandoning a chemistry major, and to study in Vienna, Austria for a year. My interest in wine did not arise in that year but the seeds that soon grew into my passion for wine were planted in a Viennese *Weinkeller*. I cannot say which – philosophy, university teaching or wine – was least expected at that moment to be guiding my intellectual travels for the next 50 years.

I nurtured my passions for philosophy and for wine separately for years. There were struggles and rewards that allowed each to prosper. As a professor of philosophy I began using examples in lectures of my experiences with wine to try to help students grasp in their own terms the questions of the philosopher being read. The first essay in this series grew out of a class taught regularly, an introductory history of aesthetics that included Plato (428-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and sometimes Georg Hegel (1770-1831) or Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and concluded with Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) or Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961). Modern aesthetics begins with Kant so he is the appropriate focus of the beginning essay here. Schopenhauer and Heidegger also have prominent roles and Hegel, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty may well appear before the series concludes.

The Kant essay did not begin in the form it has in this collection. My considering wine in relation to Kant's aesthetics arose while immersed in being a scholar as well as a teacher. The scholar picked up the connection and produced an essay, "Prolegomena To An Aesthetics of Wine," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* II:2 (1988): 120-139. Those familiar with Kant will recognize the title as a variant on his *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics*. That essay addressed scholars who know Kant rejects the possibility that wine could be a thing of beauty. My essay attempts to persuade scholars that Kant was mistaken. Assuming the reader would be a Kantian specialist it addresses readers with only the most basic experience with wine. I decided at the same time to write a version that one might describe as the mirror image of the first — addressing readers with no more than a basic understanding of Kant, or none at all, but who have some significant interest in the culture of fine wine. In the 80's I completed that version of the essay and it was enthusiastically accepted for publication by the magazine *Vintage*, edited by Hank Rubin (also wine columnist for the *SF Chronicle* before Harvey Steiman and the leading restaurateur in Berkeley before Alice Waters). *Vintage* ceased publication due to financial problems before the essay was published. The typescript remained in my desk for over 20 years. In retirement I noticed my thinking had returned to it. Revision quickly became a complete re-writing preserving the core Kantian theme. I was very pleased when it was published in 2014, "Expect the Unexpected: Heraclitus, Kant and the Aesthetics of Fine Wine," *World of Fine Wine* 43 (2014):116–123.<sup>1</sup> The version that appears here is a minor re-vision of that text to make it the beginning of this series of essays. The images chosen by *World of Fine Wine* unfortunately are not available here due to license agreements. The *WFW* publication had as its lead image Paul Klee's *The Red Balloon* 1922 Oil (and oil transfer drawing?) on chalk-primed gauze, mounted



<sup>1</sup> Permission to reproduce the cover of *WFW* 43 granted by them.

on board, 12 1/2 x 12 1/4 inches (31.7 x 31.1 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Estate of Karl Nierendorf, By purchase. I am greatly pleased to present as the lead image in this publication a painting by Glen Cebulash, *Jonah and the Whale* 2019 Oil on canvas. 72 x 66 inches (182.9 x 167.6 cm). Private collection.

I have learned how to grasp what Aristotle could have called the unifying thread connecting philosophy, university teaching and wine aesthetics that I did not understand at this journey's beginning. In saying "I have learned" I am both telling a story and describing the unifying theme of that journey. Plato did not teach me something when I read that passage in the *Republic*. What Plato did was to let me learn, mentoring me in becoming a learner. I did not conclude that what Plato was correct because Plato said it was correct. In fact the passage is presented as a question, "Don't you think ...?" One could conclude otherwise. I decided for myself that the proposed analysis is correct. At the center of my decision to become a university professor of philosophy was the wish to be a teacher whose essential task was to let students learn. I did not say it that way for many years even though it was what I was doing. The step from philosophy to wine is easily made if one understands teaching in this way. When I started telling students about my experiences tasting wines I was telling them the story of learning that was (and still is) taking place in me. I did not expect them to learn the same things but rather to become learners themselves. In these essays telling the stories of my wine journey I share accounts of the teachers who allowed me to learn about wine. I talk about wines that have given me the richest learning opportunities. My goal is to invite readers to recall their own wine experiences and to consider carefully the learning that has taken place for them. Stated in a different way the task for all of us is learning to taste. One will notice a pervasive emphasis on Taste throughout these essays.

The second essay grew directly out of the first and yet, once again, the connections are not simple. In the same year that the scholarly essay on Kant's aesthetics was published another, "Nietzsche's Schopenhauerianism," *Nietzsche Studien* 17 (1988): 45–74 also appeared. That essay turned out to be my most important scholarly contribution becoming what is called a seminal essay in its specialized area. The volume *Nietzsche Studien* 17 was reviewed by the leading Schopenhauer scholar of the time. in *Schopenhauer Studien*, Passagen Verlag because *NS* 17 included several essays on the relationship between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the death of Schopenhauer. The review mentions the other essays then focuses entirely on mine calling it a "...particularly lucid account ... which along with the latest book publications by Decher and Goedert can be counted as the most important literature about the relationship between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer." I had in fact devoted a great deal of energy to that essay, studying Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* very very carefully. The preparation of my essay on Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* prepared me perfectly to write this essay on Schopenhauer's extensive discussion of contemplation of works of art. As with the essay on Kant, my first essay on Schopenhauer was addressed to scholars. It actually had no specific reference to wine as such beyond Nietzsche's focus on the Dionysian. A future essay in this series may indeed turn to Nietzsche.

Chapter 2, *Contemplation and Fine Wine* develops Schopenhauer's highly detailed exploration of contemplation of arts from architecture through dance, sculpture and painting to its pinnacle in music. and then looks at connections to the contemplation of wine. After completing the essay on Kant and fine wine, *Expect the Unexpected*, Ch 1., it was clear that a much more detailed examination at contemplation would be very useful. Thoughts of Schopenhauer's discussion of contemplation began arising at random. Soon I decided, as Nietzsche once suggested, I needed to write to get rid of these thoughts. The resulting essay also appeared in *The World of Fine Wine*. "Contemplation and Fine Wine" Tasting with Saintsbury, Schopenhauer and Pater," *World of Fine Wine* 47

## THE WORLD OF FINE WINE



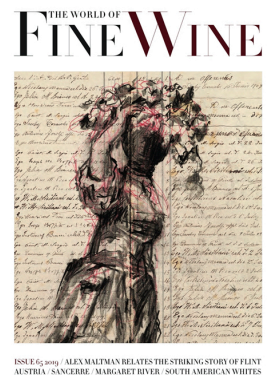
(2015):116–123.<sup>2</sup> The version that is presented here has been edited to make it part of the larger series that will eventually include additional stories of the wine journey that continues.

Chapter 3 *Tasting Dwelling Thinking* brings a turn in this journey. *Expect the Unexpected...* asked the question of Shakespeare's Mstress Quickly about extraordinary wines, "What's this?" Immanuel Kant provides a starting point in his explanation of what allows one to judge something *Beautiful*. Contemplation devoid of *interest* may include the lively free play between our Understanding and our Imagination. That experience entitles us to judge the thing contemplated *Beautiful*. Chapter 2, *Contemplation and Fine Wine...* turns to Arthur Schopenhauer's detailed analysis of aesthetic contemplation as it might be connected to the experience of a *beautiful* wine. Ch. 3 is guided by 20th century German thinker Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger's public lecture of 1951, *Building Dwelling Thinking* addressed re-construction after WWII. Normal questions at that time concerned kinds of buildings needed, their locations and uses, Heidegger took the opportunity to think about *building* in a far more fundamental way, asking essentially, "What is building?" he traces building back to its roots in *dwelling* and then dwelling back to its roots in *Being*. Heidegger's path from *Building* to *Being* is re-thought as a journey from *Tasting* to *Dwelling* and then from *Dwelling* to *Being*. The center of Chapters 1 & 2, *Contemplation*, is now thought more broadly as part of *Dwelling*. While the first segment of the journey was defined by Kantian aesthetic questions, guiding questions now come from considerations of language and poetry. Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) informs Chapter 4 and Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), Chapter 5.

None of these chapters consider opinions about wine from the philosophers or poets guiding the explorations. That does not suggest they had no opinions on wine. Kant, as noted, clearly knew about *Canary Sack*, a fine wine of his era. Schopenhauer almost certainly enjoyed good wine, dining as he did regularly at the *Englischer Hof* in Frankfurt in the mid 19th Century. In the case of Heidegger's interest in wine I have better information. In Fall, 1973 I moved to Brussels as an independent scholar to write my doctoral dissertation. I was working with Jacques Taminiaux, Université catholique de Louvain. One day Jacques announced that he would be out of town because he had been invited by Heidegger to participate in a seminar in Zähringen with four other scholars including Jean Beaufret and François Fedier. Jacques was very excited as this was his first invitation to this elite seminar. When he returned he told me stories of Heidegger reading to the group (all French scholars) from his latest writings. He read slowly enough so that they could follow but too fast to take notes. Each evening Heidegger invited two of the participants to have some wine with him and talk. In 1973 German wines were predominantly sipping wines for casual gatherings.

This is the initial publication of *Tasting Dwelling Thinking*.

Chapter 4 first appeared in *The World of Fine Wine* as a *feature wine and words*, "Gifts of Taste: Discussing Wine and Heraclitus with Friedrich Hölderlin," *The World of Fine Wine* 65 (2019): 118-124.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 3 changed the journey from contemplation to tasting as dwelling. Dwelling is understood as a lingering as was contemplation but now also as a staying in a place. A dwelling *Wohnung* can also be named an abode where one bides one's time, where one waits. *Dwelling* is understood as the essential nature of the *Being of humans*. Staying in one place, dwelling has two fundamental meanings. One is being at peace, being untroubled. This is related to building a nest. A second meaning of dwelling is to till the soil and cultivate the wine as a farmer does. Thus dwelling has in its origins cherishing and protecting. Chapter 4 turns to Hölderlin's magnificent poem, *Brod und Wein / Bread and Wine* which begins with a look at going home after a day of work. We are now in a city. Hölderlin's poem inspired Heidegger's meditation on building and dwelling in Ch. 3 and one sees that in his emphasis on home as, first of all, a place of deep contentment. Home for Hölderlin is also a safe



<sup>2</sup> Permission to reproduce the cover of *WFW* 47 granted by them.

<sup>3 3</sup> Permission to reproduce the cover of *WFW* 65 granted by them.

place to become open to mystery. The wines examined in Ch.4 are mysteries of Taste as were all the wines of the preceding chapters. Appropriately the wines considered include extraordinary wines but now also, having made our way clearly home, there are everyday wines with their own kind of mystery.